

The High Court of Andhra Pradesh has also taken various steps to reduce the pendency such as more practical categorisation and grouping of cases, to take up for hearing all the cases listed for the particular day as far as possible, non-accumulation of defective matters, reservation of more and sufficient time slot for old pending cases in chronological order and streamlining of administration and man-power of the registry through computer network.

Appointment of High Court Judges from weaker sections

438. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have written letters to all State Chief Ministers directing them to recommend persons from weaker sections for appointment of judges in all High Courts;

(b) if so, the details of the communication written to the Chief Ministers;

(c) whether Government have received the response from the Chief Ministers of all the States and UTs; and

(d) if so, by when the final decision for appointment of judges in various High Courts from the weaker sections will be taken?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (d) Appointment of Judges of the High Courts is made under article 217 of the Constitution of India which does not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. As per the existing procedure the Chief Justice of a High Court initiates a proposal for appointment of Judges. In view of the provisions of the constitution, direction cannot be issued for recommending names of persons belonging to any caste or class.

The Government have, however, addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts, from time to time, requesting them to locate persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women who are suitable for appointment as High Court Judges.

Backlog of appeals pending in I.T.A.T.

439. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the backlog of appeals pending before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal has been increasing;

(b) if so, the position as on 31 March, 2000;

(c) the steps taken to clear the backlog in 2000-2001;

(d) whether Government have taken any step to reduce the backlog of appeals pending before ITA Tribunal; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) No, Sir. The pendency is now going down 2,62,652. cases were pending as on 1.4.2000 as against the pendency of 3,00,597 cases as on 1.4.1999. The pendency has come down further to 2,46,782 as on 1.2.2001. Thus the pendency has come down by 53,815 cases during the above period.

(b) the pendency as on 31.3.2000 was 2,62,652 cases.

(c) to (e) In order to reduce the pendency of appeals, the Government has sanctioned 15 additional Benches, out of which 13 benches have been made functional.

In addition, Single Member Case (SMC) powers have been conferred on all eligible members to enable them to dispose of cases where the assessed income is up to Rs. 5.00 lakhs.

Amendment to the Constitution

440. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to bring forward an amendment to the Constitution to provide for fixed tenure of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas to ensure good governance in the country; and

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Cases of Land Acquisition and Compensation

441. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state: